

Guidelines for Observation in the Primary Classes

Thank you for visiting Meraki Montessori School. We are happy to have you.

Observation is an important part of becoming a Montessori Parent. Observations are necessary as part of the enrolment process and are also available to existing parents in order to better understand their child's school day.

Observations usually start at 8.45am and taken about an hour. At this time the children are coming into class and settling down to their work.

A teacher will suggest the best place to observe from to allow you a good view of what is happening in the class that day. You are also welcome to move around quietly if you so wish.

After about 45 minutes one of the teachers will have a chat with you and answer any questions you may have, then please return to the office where someone will discuss school fees and the rest of the enrolment/selection process with you.

It is important that you observe as a scientist observes – without interaction that would disrupt and change the phenomenon you have come to observe. Following these points will lessen the interruptions to the children's day and also give you the opportunity to see the class operating as it normally does rather than reacting to the novelty of your presence.

- Please remain quiet
- Avoid working with the children. The materials are presented in a specific manner and it will confuse the children if they are handled differently.
- Avoid talking with the teachers. We will be happy to answer any of your questions after the observation. During the time the children are here our attention must focus on them. If questions occur to you while you are watching, please write them down.
- If children approach you, be pleasant but brief. You may say something like "I came to see you work." The children understand that observers come to watch them working and they will understand your response in that context.

Thank you for your consideration.

Enjoy your visit!

Please see the next page for some suggestions of things to think about and look for when you are observing.

Guidelines for Observation

We anticipate that you have read the background on the importance of observation in the Montessori Context.....found either in the Prospective Student Portfolio or at our website.

Thinks to look for:

Notes:

On entering classroom you will notice a wide range of activities taking place at the same time.	
Observe in a context. Alternate between a 'wide-angled' view of the entire classroom as well as focussing on a particular child or group of children.	
Observe the activity level as it rises and falls	
Notice how the children learn in different ways and how they use the materials	
Follow a child that does not seem to be working to see what may evolve.	
Pay attention to your own reactions. How do you respond to the phenomenon you observe?	
Note the way in which the children work. Do you see stress? Joy? Contemplation?	
If you are familiar with Montessori Pre-School notice the different behaviour patterns in the Primary student	
Watch the way teachers interact with children. What seems to be the role of the teacher? What do you see as differing from	

the way you were educated?	
Listen to the teacher's tone of voice with the children.	
How do children move from one activity to another?	
Observe the children's relationships. How do they communicate? What social context do you observe?	
What do you notice about the structure of the environment?	
What is the ambiance?	
What other things do you observe?	